**PROJECT HASHTAG: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CAREGIVERS**

**RESEARCH PROJECT:** *Health Action in ScHools for a Thriving Adolescent Generation (Project HASHTAG): the development and pilot testing of a multilevel, multicomponent intervention for young at-risk adolescents in low- and middle-income countries*

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** N19/07/088

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:** Prof. Mark Tomlinson and A/Prof. Sarah Skeen

**ADDRESS:** Institute for Life Course Health Research, Department of Global Health, Stellenbosch University

**CONTACT NUMBERS:** 021 364 2754

**Invitation to participate:** Your child is being invited to take part in a research project, and we need your consent to continue. This form will explain the details of this project. If you have any questions after reading this form, we ask you to please reach out to our study staff at 021 364 2754. It is very important that you clearly understand what this research is about and how your child could be involved.

After you read this form, you can decide if you would like your child to participate. You will be asked to confirm your understanding and sign your name to approve participation. \****Please return this form with your signature to give consent with your child. You can keep a second copy for your own records.***

**What is this research study about?** We are working to develop a school-based programme for young people, Project HASHTAG, to improve the health and wellbeing of young people like your child. This includes physical health, such as reducing harmful substance use. It also includes emotional health, such as stress, depression, and anxiety that many young people face. This project is also focused on the school environment, and finding ways to improve young people’s experiences with peers and teachers at school. In order to test this programme, we need to conduct a research study to understand the challenges and positive experiences young adolescents are facing. The project will be conducted in South Africa and Nepal.

This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, which oversees research and ensures protection of researchers and participants.. They study will align with the International Declaration of Helsinki (October 2008), South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and the Medical Research Council (MRC) Ethical Guidelines for Research.

**Why do we invite you to participate?** We have asked you to be part of this study because you are the parent or caregiver of a Grade 8 learner in one of the schools we selected for the study.

**What will your child’s responsibilities be?** If both you and your child agree for him/her to participate, your child will be interviewed individually, in quiet, private space at school or at the Masiphuhlisane Centre. The interview will take about 1 hour to complete. They will be asked questions about their wellbeing, their emotions, and their experiences at school. Your child will be interviewed at two times – now, and again around October-November of this year. You will be contacted about the day and time of your child’s interview.

Your child’s participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decline for them to participate. This decision is completely up to you, and your child: no one is forcing you to take part. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way. You are also free to change your mind at any point, even if you do agree to take part in the beginning. He/she can drop out of the study at any time if they are no longer interested or if they are uncomfortable. Also, if they are unable to complete the interview for some reason, this can be rescheduled.

**Will you benefit from taking part in this research?** There are no direct benefits for you and your child being part of this research. However, we hope that our findings will help improve school climate and student wellbeing in the future. The project may help produce a low-cost, simple school-based programme. We understand that adolescents may have different needs, and experience different types of relationships with their peers, teachers, and carers. We hope that this research will allow us to find ways to better support adolescents like your child in the future. We also hope that this programme will be able to be used in areas with high adversity, to improve adolescent health and well-being for those students facing greater risks.

**Are there any risks involved in your taking part in this research** No harm will come to you or your child through taking part in this study. Your child will speak to the research team and provide opinions and answers for questions, which are entered on to a mobile phone. If your child becomes upset because of anything that happens during the interview, or afterwards, you can contact the local project managers, Zanele Siqabatiso, at 021 364 2754 or Tatenda Mawoyo at 0767773678.

Also, we have put protective measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19. These include screening, temperature checks, sanitizing, wearing of face masks and social distancing. If you have any further questions about these measures, please ask at the above contact number.

**If you do not agree to take part, what happens?** Your child does not have to take part in this project if he/she do not want to; they will not be affected if they decide not to be involved. This is a voluntary activity. The staff will answer any questions that you have, and if you are still not satisfied, or you have complaints, you can call the Committee for Human Research at Stellenbosch University, at 021 938 9207. There is also a chance your child may be asked to leave the study early at the discretion of the research team.

**Who will have access to your child’s information?** All your child’s information will be stored safely, and kept secure and confidential. Your child’s personal information will be completely anonymous and confidential, and will be stored on password-protected mobile devices. The consent forms that you have signed (including this one) will be locked away in an office at Stellenbosch University during the study.

Information from the study will be examined by the HASHTAG research team at Stellenbosch University and some of their research partners at other universities. If any findings from the study are published, all your child’s information will remain confidential and not connected to their name. The people who are paying for this research (the UK Medical Research Council), and the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) members may also need to look at the study records, but nobody will be able to identify you or your child personally.

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?** You and your child will not be paid to take part in this study. You should not have any additional expenses to participant. At each interview, your child will receive a voucher for the value of R180.00. This amount is in line with what the university allows, and recommends. The money is for your child’s time and inconvenience only, as a thank you.

**Is there anything else that you should know or do?** You can contact our team at 021 364 2754 or at 0767773678 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems. You can contact the Health Research Ethics Committee at 021-938 9207 if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the form or the HASHTAG research team. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

**PLEASE FILL EACH BOX WITH A CHECK MARK or “X”.**

* I confirm that I have read, or had read to me, and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and receive full answers.
* I understand that my participation and my child’s participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.
* I understand the study is being conducted by researchers from Stellenbosch University in partnership with Queen’s University Belfast and that my child’s personal information will be held securely on Stellenbosch University premises and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
* I understand that data collected as part of this study may be looked at by authorized individuals from Stellenbosch University, Queen’s University Belfast, the World Health Organization and regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my child’s taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to this information.
* I agree for my child to take part in the above study.
* I understand that the information my child provides may be published as a report. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify my child from any publications.
* I understand that this study is confidential but there are limits to this confidentiality. Revelations that are criminal may require confidentiality to be broken by the researchers.
* I understand that what my child discusses during the interviews or observations or focus group is confidential with the exception that if they disclose information that indicates that they am at risk of harming myself or others, or in danger of being harmed by someone else, the researcher is legally obliged to pass on this information to the study manager.
* I understand the interviews with my child will be audio recorded for quality control reasons.
* I agree to being contacted at a later date and invited to take part in future studies of a similar nature. I understand that I am only agreeing to receive information and I am under no obligation (nor is my child) to take part in any future studies. If I decide not to consent to being contacted in the future it will not have any influence on my involvement in this particular research study.
* I understand that my child’s data shared here may be used for analysis at a later time for other research purposes but that all confidential measures will be maintained.

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**Name of caregiver Name of child**

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**Signature of caregiver Date**

**\*PLEASE RETURN ONE SIGNED FORM, AND KEEP ONE FOR YOUR RECORDS.**